

A SIGHTING OF THE DOLLARBIRD IN THE NORTHERN FLINDERS RANGES

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A Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* was seen by the author at Brindana Gorge on the Hamilton Creek in the northern Flinders Ranges (29°57'33"S, 139°37'31"E) at approximately 1500 hours on 3 February 1982. The bird's lack of a blue throat patch and red eye-lid together with its generally dull bill and feet pointed to it being an immature bird.

It was first observed circling some River Red

Gums *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* var. *obtusa*. Then it flew up the Gorge before the author, settling low on the rocks about 50 m ahead. It stayed there, occasionally calling, until the author was about 15 m away, then flew ahead once more. These movements were repeated several times with the bird at one stage landing on the dry creekbed. The author stopped at the head of the Gorge and the bird eventually flew

back down the Gorge but was not seen again.

This is an unusual occurrence. The Dollarbird is a regular spring and summer breeding migrant to northern and eastern Australia from areas to the north of the continent. It regularly occurs as far south as north-eastern Victoria with occasional sightings elsewhere (Pizzey 1980). The species had not previously been seen in the above area by the author during monthly visits since July 1980 although Condon (1969) reported sightings at Witchelina Station, about 150 km to the west, dating from 1925 and at Mount Nor-west Station, some 30 km further west, from 1927. These were also summer sightings.

At the time of the Brindana sighting above, the area was experiencing a summer drought for the second year in succession, with frequent high temperatures. However, at the time it was relatively mild (38°C), the highest temperature recorded for five days.

Earlier in 1982, P. Read and P. Flaherty *Nent Oura Research Unit, G.P.O. Box 498, Adelaide, S.A., 5001*

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(pers. comm.) reported another sighting of the Dollarbird in the South Mount Lofty Ranges on the Onkaparinga River, 2 km S of Clarendon on 8 January 1982. Condon (1969) also recorded two Dollarbirds being seen in the Mount Lofty Ranges at Mylor, in January 1918 when one male was collected. Other records of the species in southern South Australia have been made at: 20 km SW of Naracoorte (Attiwill 1963), Nor-west Bend on the River Murray (Brockmeyer, in Glover 1968), 15 km S of Angaston (Loftus 1976) and at Antechamber Bay, Kangaroo Island (Lashmar 1978).

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